

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 PA-02 H-02 ISO-00
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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O 262334Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS STATE 107185

CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 27, 1978

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1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 27. FYI ONLY, OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER.

Q. THIS MORNING, AFTER A SENATE GROUP CAME TO SEE MR. VANCE ABOUT THE MIDEAST ARMS PACKAGE, SENATOR JAVITS CAME DOWN AND HE SAID THAT THE SENATE WOULD NOT ONLY BREAK UP UNCLASSIFIED

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THE ARMS PACKAGE BUT DEAL WITH EACH ELEMENT OF THE PACKAGE AS THEY PERCEIVE THE SECURITY NEEDS OF EACH COUNTRY TO BE. IS IT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S UNDERSTANDING THAT CONGRESS HAS THE AUTHORITY NOT ONLY TO BREAK UP THE PACKAGE BUT TO REVISE ELEMENTS OF THE PACKAGE?

A. WELL, CERTAINLY, AS THE PRESIDENT SAID YESTERDAY, THE LAW ESTABLISHES THAT EACH ONE OF THEM, IS HANDLED SEPARATELY.

Q. WELL, THAT I THINK WENT INTO DIVISION, BUT I WONDERED, ONCE YOU DIVIDE, THAT IS TO SAY WHETHER IT CAN BE SUBSTANTIVELY ALTERED IN EACH COMPONENT.

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. I DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU'LL GET IT, BUT I'LL FIND OUT.

Q. THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN SEND IT UP IS ONE NOTICE FOR EACH SALE.

A. THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT HAS BEEN SAID CONSISTENTLY, HOWEVER, IS THAT IF ONE IS REJECTED THAT IT MUST ALL BE ACCEPTED AS A PACKAGE -- THAT WE ARE PRESENTING IT AS A PACKAGE. THAT'S NOT A LEGAL; THAT'S A POLITICAL DECISION.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISRAELI POSITION? WOULD THEY RATHER HAVE THEIR PLANES WITHDRAWN RATHER THAN

SEE THE OTHER PLANES GO TO SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT?

A. I DON'T KNOW. I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE PRESS REPORTS ON THINGS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID REGARDING THAT. HE'S HERE FOR WHAT ARE GOING TO BE A MINIMUM OF FIVE HOURS OF TALKS WITH SECRETARY VANCE, AS PLOTTED OUT SO FAR. HE WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO YOU I THINK SOMETIME AROUND 2:30 THIS AFTERNOON WHEN HE'S THROUGH WITH THIS FIRST ROUND, AND YOU MIGHT PUT THE QUESTION TO UNCLASSIFIED

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HIM BECAUSE I CANNOT SPEAK FOR HIM AT THIS POINT AND THE CONVERSATION HAS JUST STARTED.

Q. WHEN WILL THE ADMINISTRATION SEND THE PACKAGE UP TO THE HILL?

A. I DON'T HAVE AN EXACT DATE, BUT I'D SAY THAT THE BEST GUESS I CAN GIVE YOU, WHICH STILL DEPENDS ON THE CONSULTATIONS THAT THE SENATORS AND THE SECRETARY HAVE BEEN HAVING, WILL PROBABLY BE LATE THIS WEEK -- LATE FRIDAY, SOMETHING ALONG THAT LINE. BUT THAT STILL DEPENDS ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONSULTATIONS.

Q. DO YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT A COMPROMISE IS POSSIBLE ON THIS ISSUE?

A. I THINK I REALLY WOULDN'T GO BEYOND WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID YESTERDAY ON THE SUBJECT. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THE POSITION WE HAVE TAKEN IS IN THE INTERESTS BOTH OF STABILITY AND PEACE IN THE REGION AND THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL THE PARTIES AND THE UNITED STATES ITSELF. I REALLY

THINK THAT THERE'S NOT MUCH FURTHER I CAN SAY ON THAT, IN VIEW OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY.

Q. ON THE BASIS OF YOUR OWN COUNT, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS THE VOTES NOW TO SEE THAT ITS VIEW PREVAILS?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. COULD YOU CHECK WITH IT?

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A. I WILL SEE WHETHER THEY HAVE A POLITICAL COUNT THAT THEY WANT TO GIVE.

Q. WE WERE GIVEN TODAY AS THE DATE FOR THE SUBMITTAL TO

THE CONGRESS OF THE PACKAGE. WAS IT POSTPONED BECAUSE OF THE DAYAN VISIT OR WHY THE CHANGE IN DATE?

A. AS I SAID, THE SECRETARY HAS BEEN CONSULTING, AND IS CONSULTING AND IS CONTINUING TO CONSULUT, AND THAT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.

Q. WILL YOU CONSIDER WHAT MR. DAYAN HAS TO SAY?

A. WELL, OBVIOUSLY, ANYTHING THAT MR. DAYAN HAS TO SAY WILL CERTAINLY BE CONSIDERED WITH INTEREST. I MEAN THAT ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS THAT GO INTO THIS.

Q. DOES THE SECRETARY'S CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SENATORS INVOLVE THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGING THE NUMBER OF AIR-PLANES GOING TO EACH OF THE COUNTRIES? HAVE THEY BEGUN NEGOTIATING THE TERMS OF THE PACKAGE?

A. I DON'T THINK THAT THAT WOULD BE SO MUCH THE CASE AS IT IS A QUESTION OF HEARING THROUGH THE VIEW OF KEY CONGRESSMEN, AND TO EXPLAIN ONCE MORE OUR VIEWS. I WOULD THINK THAT I AM NOT YET IN ANY POSITION TO CALL IT NEGOTIATING DOWN OR AWAY FROM A POSITION SO MUCH AS EXPLORING WITH EACH ON BOTH SIDES.

Q. YES. I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY, AND YOU SAID THAT IT'S MOSTLY AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. THEN IS IT PARTLY A NEGOTIATION WITH A VIEW TO CHANGING THE NUMBERS?

A. NO. I'M SURE THAT IT'S NOT ONLY AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BUT A DISCUSSION AFTER YOU EXCHANGE THEM. I MEAN AS TO WHY YOU THINK YOU'RE RIGHT AND WHY THEY THINK THEY'RE UNCLASSIFIED

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RIGHT. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THAT AT THIS POINT I CAN

CHARACTERIZE THIS AS A NEGOTIATION AWAY FROM A POSITION.

Q. I DON'T REALLY THINK YOU'VE ANSWERED THE QUESTION. THE QUESTION IS: IS THE ADMINISTRATION OPEN TO AND IS IT IN THE PROCESS OF DISCUSSING WITH THE SENATORS THE DETAILS OF THE PACKAGE, WITH A POSSIBILITY THAT THE NUMBERS OF PLANES REQUESTED FOR SAUDI ARABIA AND/OR FOR EGYPT WILL BE ALTERED BEFORE THE PACKAGE IS SUBMITTED TO THE HILL? NOT THAT IT IS AS MUCH THAT AS SOMETHING ELSE, BUT IS ANY OF THAT GOING ON NOW?

A. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE ARE NEGOTIATING ABOUT NUMBERS.

Q. CAN YOU SAY WHAT THEN IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATIONS?

A. I THINK IT'S THE SAME PURPOSE AS MOST CONSULTATIONS THAT WE HAVE -- WHICH IS TO FIRST ESTABLISH CLEARLY WHAT IT IS THAT THE OTHER PARTIES HAVE TO SAY, AND TO LISTEN, AND TO EXPLAIN AGAIN WHY IT IS, AS THE PRESIDENT SAID YESTERDAY, WE THINK THAT THE PACKAGE APPROACH AND THE COMPONENTS THEREOF ARE IN THE INTERESTS BOTH OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND STABILITY THERE AND OUR OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS. AND THIS IS WHAT'S KNOWN SOMETIMES AS PERSUASION ON BOTH SIDES. PEOPLE DO THINK OFTEN THAT THEY CAN ALTER OTHER PEOPLE'S OPINIONS.

Q. IS IT SAFE TO ASSUME, BASED ON WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID, THAT THERE'S NO CHANCE, AS A RESULT OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, THAT THERE WOULD BE A DELAY OR AN ALTERATION IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSALS?

A. IT IS MY OWN FEELING THAT THE PROPOSAL IS GOING TO GO FORWARD AT THE END OF THIS WEEK.

Q. THERE WILL BE HEARINGS THEN, WON'T THERE?

A. MOST CERTAINLY.

Q. PEOPLE TESTIFYING IN THE SAME FASHION THAT HE'S DOING NOW. I'M JUST TRYING TO ESTABLISH THAT THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON. I MEAN YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A PROCESS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO THROUGH ANYWAY.

A. YES, EXCEPT THAT YOU OF COURSE HOPE THAT THE CLIMATE IN WHICH THE PROCESS GOES FORWARD IS SATISFACTORY TO YOUR OWN POINT OF VIEW.

Q. WILL THE SECRETARY TESTIFY FIRST BEFORE THE HOUSE OR THE SENATE?

A. I DON'T THINK THAT DECISION IS MADE. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. WHEN YOU SAID THAT YOU'RE HEARING THROUGH THE VIEWS OF THE KEY CONGRESSMEN, AND YOUR FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU'RE HEARING THEM THROUGH WITH A CLOSED MIND.

A. NO. YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO HAVE THE CONSULTATION. ALL I'M SAYING --

Q. WELL, IT WOULD SUGGEST THEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE. YOU SEEM TO BE RULING THAT OUT.

A. WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT OBVIOUSLY WE ARE INTERESTED

IN THE DIALOGUE WITH THE CONGRESSMEN. OBVIOUSLY WE WANT
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TO HEAR THEIR VIEWPOINT, AND OBVIOUSLY WE WANT TO PRESENT
OURS BACK TO THEM. INsofar AS A CHANGE IN OUR
PACKAGE IS CONCERNED, I DON'T KNOW OF ANY THAT'S BEING
OFFERED AND I THINK WE ARE LISTENING CAREFULLY. THAT'S
THE BEST THAT I CAN SAY.

Q. HAVEN'T YOU BEEN DOING THIS NOW FOR THREE MONTHS?

A. YES, BUT OF COURSE THE FOCUS WAS RATHER WIDER THAN IT
IS NOW, AND THE PRIORITY POLITICALLY ON ACTION WAS DIFFERENT
FROM WHAT IT IS NOW. WE ARE NOW AT THE POINT WHICH WE
PROMISED THAT THIS WOULD GO FORWARD. THAT CLEARLY CHANNELS
OUR EFFORTS A LITTLE BIT MORE.

Q. IF YOU ARE NOT CHANGING ANYTHING FROM WHAT YOU HAVE
SAID DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS IN WHAT YOU PROPOSE,
WHAT'S THE POINT IN DELAYING?

A. WE HAVEN'T CHANGED OUR POSITION ON A NUMBER OF THINGS
OVER THE LAST YEAR. THAT DOESN'T KEEP US FROM TALKING TO
THE SAME PARTIES OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN AN ATTEMPT TO SEE
WHETHER THERE'S NOT SOME WAY EITHER THAT THE PARTIES MIGHT
CHANGE OR THAT WE COULD REACH A SATISFACTORY BRIDGING.
THAT IS THE NATURE OF THE POLITICAL GAME. THAT'S WHAT
WE'RE CONTINUING TO DO.

Q. SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT WE'RE LEAVING OPEN THE POSSI-
BILITY THAT THESE CONSULTATIONS COULD RESULT.

A. I SIMPLY DON'T CLOSE ANY. I SIMPLY DON'T CONFIRM THAT
THERE ARE ANY. I CAN'T CLOSE OFF ALL OPTIONS.

Q. SENATOR CASE SAID THIS MORNING THAT THE SECRETARY WAS
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WILLING TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN THE PROPOSAL IN SOME MINOR
WAYS BUT NOT ON THE CENTRAL ISSUES OF THE PACKAGE. CAN
YOU GIVE US SOME IDEA OF WHAT MINOR CHANGES MIGHT COME
ABOUT?

A. NO.

Q. WELL, CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT THE SECRETARY IS WILLING
TO ACCEPT THEM?

A. NO. I'M NOT GOING TO CONTRADICT SENATOR CASE.
I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY DISCUSSION ABOUT THE VARIANT F-15 FOR SAUDI ARABIA THAT WOULD LEAVE OFF OFFENSIVE BOMB RACKS OR SOMEHOW LESSEN THEIR OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY?

A. I THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY SAID THAT THERE WERE A COUPLE OF THINGS HE UNDERSTOOD HAD BEEN AGREED TO BY THE SAUDIS, INCLUDING SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE USE OF TABUK; AND ALSO HE SAID THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE WAY THAT THE F-15S WERE GOING TO BE CONFIGURED THAT THEY WOULD BE, AS HE'S DESCRIBED THEM, PRIMARILY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS. I'M NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND THAT.

Q. I WANT TO FOLLOW UP MARVIN'S PROPOSAL. I COME AWAY FROM THIS CONVERSATION WITH THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU HOPE THAT THE TALKS THAT YOU'RE HAVING WILL CHANGE THEIR MINDS, BUT YOU'RE NOT NEGOTIATING TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.

A. I THINK THAT WHAT I'VE SAID IS PRETTY CLEAR. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE'RE TALKING TO HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES, HAVE THEY NOT? AND WE'VE DECLARED OURSELVES. WHY ARE THEY COMING IN TO TALK TO US. AND WHY ARE WE TALKING TO THEM? THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE DO IN A POLITICAL SYSTEM IN WHICH CONSENT IS NECESSARY RATHER THAN DICTATION. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE UNCLASSIFIED

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DOING. - -

Q. CAN I ASK A QUESTION ABOUT YOUR ANSWER TO MARVIN'S QUESTION A LITTLE BIT EARLIER WHERE HE ASKED YOU WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION HAD THE VOTES AND YOU SAID YOU DON'T KNOW?

TWO DAYS AGO AT THE WHITE HOUSE MR. POWELL WAS ASKED THAT SAME QUESTION, AND HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DID HAVE THE VOTES; AND WHAT I'M TRYING TO ASCERTAIN HERE IS WHETHER YOU KNOW LESS THAN MR. POWELL.

A. YES. THEIR POLITICAL COUNTING IS BETTER THAN MINE, PARTICULARLY SINCE I WASN'T IN TOWN UNTIL YESTERDAY.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION ON THE FORTIFICATION OF THE ISRAELI TROOPS IN SOUTH LEBANON, THE ISRAELI AIRPORT IN SOUTH LEBANON?

A. NO, I DON'T. I JUST SAW THAT BEFORE I CAME IN.

Q. COULD YOU GET ME SOMETHING ON IT, PLEASE?

A. I'LL SEE.

2. THE FOLLOWING ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN AT THE

NOON BRIEFING ON APRIL 25 WAS POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT
ON APRIL 25:

Q. WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENT ON THE
KUWAITI NEWSPAPER STORY THAT THREE SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPERTS
WERE KILLED HELPING DISMANTLE AN ISRAELI NUCLEAR
LISTENING DEVICE PLANTED IN SYRIA?
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A. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON ANY SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPERTS
BEING KILLED IN SYRIA.

VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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